

FACILITIES FOR ALIEN RPG LOCATIONS

"What kinds of modules or facilities should exist on my ship / space station / colony" is a frequently asked question from the Alien RPG community. This is a compilation of ideas suggested by players.

Airlocks: Airlocks usually have staging rooms with pressure suit lockers, air filling stations, maneuvering devices.

Android repair / service center: Did you know that the ND-255 Weyland-Yutani synthetic was originally designed for mining and safety tasks? On a starship or space station, androids might just need a place to "relax" when they aren't needed.

Arboretum / botanical garden: A space set aside for greenery, whether it's for scientific purposes, conservation efforts, or just a place for relaxation.

Antigravity maintenance: Control room and facilities for producing artificial gravity.

Atmosphere control: Central air quality monitoring station, air filters and scrubbers, climate controls, air circulation fans.

Banking services office: Workers might need a place to get paid or perform other financial transactions, maybe involving long-range services involving coordination with banking institutions back home.

Bar / arcade: A place for workers to drink, blow off steam, play pool. May or may not be the place to meet up with company-approved sex-shifting pleasure androids. Could be a speakeasy that the company doesn't know about or doesn't bother to regulate.

Barber shop: Unless you just want everyone to self-administer a buzz cut.

Boilers and pumps: For hot water, and the means to distribute water.

Cafeteria: Kitchen, pantry, walk-in freezers, buffet-style food service area, tables for mealtimes. Maybe one big cafeteria for the workers, smaller one for the officers (if they don't have kitchenettes in their cabins).

Chapel / house of worship: A place for religious services, probably also used for some recreational activities and other gatherings.

Communication services office: Workers might want to send and receive long-range messages. Since this is probably no small feat, it could require a dedicated service and private comms booths.

Communications / sensors / traffic control center: For internal and external communications, detection and guidance of incoming and outgoing traffic, and general awareness of what's moving in the vicinity. Likely attached to a large transceiver array and various sensory apparatus.

Daycare / class rooms: If any of the higher-ranked officers are allowed to have their families aboard the station.

Defensive weapons: Even if it's just for blasting the occasional meteorite that strays too close.

Demolition device storage: Mining and prospecting operations may make use of explosives for the purposes of rock removal and seismic surveying, and would need a secure place to store those explosives.

Docking bay / landing pad / landing grid: A place for a shuttle or other aircraft to park. Shuttles would be bringing in supplies and new personnel, and carrying away workers at the end of their tours along with harvested minerals. Would include service facilities such as cranes and forklifts for moving cargo, and refueling.

Emergency services: A station for firefighting and other first-responder kinds of activities.

Fuel silos: Probably lots of different kinds of fuels are needed for the various vehicles and tools used at the station.

Garages / motor pool: A place to park and maintain ground vehicles. Likely to include mechanic's work stations, spare parts lockers, fuel depot.

General store / commissary: Spend your company scrip on razors, magazines, bubble gum and cheap electronics.

Greenhouse: Hydroponic garden providing fresh food, also helps with replenishing oxygen and removing carbon dioxide.

Gym / weight room / swimming pool: It's always leg day in space.

Heat sinks: Getting rid of excess heat in space requires specialized apparatus. These could be sizable and important parts of a space station requiring careful monitoring.

Housing: Communal dorms for the rank-and-file workers (see the movie 'Outand' for a great example), maybe communal showers too. Single-family dwellings. Private cabins for higher-ranked employees. Guest suites for company inspectors or other visitors. Really do the math to figure out how many workers and officers need accommodation, and make sure there's enough housing space for all of them.

Human resources: Offices for workers' arbitration, conflict resolution, staff psychologists, and union representatives.

Laundry room: Clothes and bedding get stanky.

Lavatories: Scattered throughout the complex. These are important, not just as places for workers to relieve themselves, but also just to wash their hands. Emergency chemical showers / eye-wash stations are useful too.

Lifeboats / escape vehicles: In case the station needs to be evacuated in a hurry. Could also include an ambulance (dedicated rapid medical transit) or search-and-rescue craft.

Lots of storage compartments: Janitorial supplies, emergency supplies, office supplies, spare parts, pallets of shelf-stable foods and potable water for emergencies, medical supplies, tools.

Machine shop / fabrication shop / engineering department: Workspace for crews responsible for routine maintenance of mechanical and electrical systems, as well as performing on-site repairs of mining equipment, space suits or what have you, with the ability to rebuild just about any technology that breaks.

Mainframe / computer room: What's the story, Mother? A place for the central computers and maybe a private interface station for senior officers to chat with the AI overwatch system. Backup computers would be a good idea.

Monorail / train / tram / miscellaneous transport systems: Sprawling facilities are likely to have rail-based transport systems for personnel and bulk materials. People-movers such as moving walkways are possible. Low-gravity areas might facilitate vertical movement of bulk supplies.

Multi-purpose room: A large room for company-wide announcements and re-training center, that can also serve as a sports / rec room, movie theater, a meeting place for addict recovery programs, worship services, and so on. A big room with a bunch of portable chairs and maybe a stage.

Observation lounge: A nice place for workers to relax and look at the stars.

Operations center: Where the senior staff can monitor and orchestrate activities throughout the station on a daily basis and during emergencies. In addition to a large central room with computers and lots of big computer screens with maps and mining progress information on them, this area might have an accounting office, human resources office, conference room, commerce regulator's office (such as an ICC representative).

Ore processing: Places to receive raw ore, store it, maybe separate it, discard the chaff, transport the paydirt onto shuttles. There could be attached laboratories where minerals are tested and inspected. I'd probably start with this stuff, and then build the rest of the station around it. Look for mining flowcharts and turn each of the steps into its own room (example provided in follow-up post).

Powerplant and backup batteries: Two reactors are better than one, and emergency power is a must. Reactors would have control rooms, and extensive cooling systems (could be a room with lots of chains hanging from the ceiling and indoor rain).

Propulsion systems: Orbital platforms and other space-based facilities will likely need thrusters to maintain or change position. There may be dedicated propulsion control rooms, or this can be handled from a central operations center. Inertial dampening systems are a way to transfer energy and momentum so that maneuvers are less impactful / stressful on structures and passengers. Propulsion systems may require specialized fuels and certainly various support modules and redundancy.

Radiation shelter: If radiation spikes from nearby stars or other sources are a concern.

Reception: A place for new arrivals to check in and get pointed in the right direction.

Science lab: You don't know what you don't know, so it might be worthwhile (profitable) to have a well-equipped science facility to investigate anything you stumble across that hasn't been seen before. There could be unique microbes or exotic minerals in any asteroid or comet that you happen to be mining out there, or maybe even artifacts of complex extraterrestrial life.

Scrap yard / rubbish tip: Waste dump. There might be separate dumping places for general colony waste, mining spoil and slag, heavy metals, and toxic waste.

Security office: Surveillance posts, and a place for security personnel to keep their arms and armor. Would include a drunk tank / holding cells. Maybe a station for colonial marshal.

Space elevator: A bridge to orbit, allowing transport of bulk supplies up and down a gravity well without the need for vehicles with heavy lifting capacity or other transorbital flights / drops. Needs an anchoring facility at ground level and a cargo transfer hub there, a very long vertical lifting system / elevator complex, and a terminus in orbit with its own cargo transport hub and docking facilities / spaceport for spacecraft.

Specialty restaurants and shops: Depending on how much of a "company town" you want this to feel like, there could be a bakery, liquor store, noodle / sushi restaurant, pizza restaurant, diner, clothing shop, coffee shop, prospector's supply, vehicle dealership. These shops could all be services provided by the company, or there could be a kind of strip mall of empty suites for franchisees to lease.

Theater: A place to watch movies, training videos, and the like.

Therapy room: For therapy sessions. The place probably needs a staff psychologist and psychiatrist.

Trauma center: Medical facility for routine treatment of injuries, dentistry, surgeries, and quarantine (isolation ward). Waiting room, exam room, pharmacy and morgue may be included.

Vault / strong room: A very secure storage place for valuables, weapons, sensitive data, and so on. Likely to be accessible only by senior administrators or purser.s

Waste disposal / recycling: Jettison what you absolutely can't recycle.

Water reclamation / recycling / treatment: Probably some water silos involved.

OFFSITE FACILITIES

These are additional assets that could be set some distance from the main station.

Buoys: Navigational guides or remote sensors.

Communication relays: Used to boost incoming and outgoing signals.

Drilling / prospecting / testing camps: Remote exploratory drilling sites, sample collecting missions, science expeditions, and bases of operations for their crews.

Emergency shelters: Places of refuge on hostile worlds.

Storage depots: Temporary storage areas, possibly at convenient crossroads or midway points between other facilities.

Weather stations: Outposts where weather systems can be tracked, giving early warnings to the main facility.